

Message Text

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UNCLAS KUWAIT 3627

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, KU

SUBJ: NEW HOTEL FOR KUWAIT

REF: KUWAIT 4990

1. PROMINENT KUWAITI BUSINESSMAN, GHAZI AL-NAFEESI, CONTACTED EMBASSY RE HIS PROPOSAL TO BUILD NEW LUXURY HOTEL IN KUWAIT. NAFEESI WANTS CONTACT WITH HOLIDAY INNS INC., 3742 LAMAR AVE., MEMPHIS, TENN. 38118. NAFEESI IS CHAIRMAN OF SALHIYAH REAL ESTATE CO., SHAREHOLDING COMPANY OWNED BY COMMERICAL BANK OF KUWAIT, GULF INSURANCE CO., KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT CO., UNITED REAL ESTATE CO. AND SEVERAL PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN.

2. ONLY EXISTING LUXURY HOTELS NOW IN KUWAIT ARE HILTON AND SHERTON. BOTH THESE UNDERGOING EXPANSION BUT WITH CURRENT BUSINESS BOOM IN MIDDLE EAST, HOTELS ARE USUALLY BOOKED SOLID THROUGH AUTUMN, WINTER, AND SPRING. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT TWO MORE LUXURY HOTELS WILL BE LICENSED IN KUWAIT TOTALLING APPROX. 1000 ROOMS. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND SEVERAL MAJOR HOTELS ARE INTERESTED INCLUDING MERIDIEN (FRENCH), AND INTERCONTINENTAL.

3. NAFEESI TOLD EMBOFFS SALHIYAH REAL ESTATE CO. HAS 8000 SQ METERS OF PROPERTY IN DOWNTOWN AREA FOR DEVELOPEMENT. HOTEL WOULD BE BUILT ON APPROX. 1100 SQ METERS WITH REMAINDER DEVELOPED FOR OFFICE SPACE, SHOPS, AND PARKING.

4. ACTION REQUESTED AND COMMENT: REQUEST COMMERCE INFORM
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HOLIDAY INN AND ASK COMPANY CONTACT NAFEESI AT AL-SALHIYAH

REAL ESTATE CO., P.O. BOX 23413, KUWAIT. FYI. NAFEESI HAS
PREVIOUS CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS OF NEW ORLEANS HOLIDAY INN,
THE RAULT, BUT HE WANTS DEAL DIRECTLY WITH HOLIDAY INN CORPORATE
HEADQUARTERS. END FYI. ALSO SUGGEST COMMERCE ALERT OTHER
CIMILAR CHAINS, E.G. MARRIOTT, HYATT HOUSE TO SEE IF INTEREST
EXISTS THERE. NAFEESI ASKED THAT INTERCONTINENTAL BE INFORMED,
BUT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT COMPANY ALREADY IN TOUCH WITH ANOTHER
GROUP HERE. COMMERCE MAY ALSO WASNT INFORM HOLIDAY INN AND OTHERS
OF REQUEST FROM DIRECTOR-GENERAL CIVIL AVIATION FOR NAMES OF
U.S. FIRMS INTERESTED IN MANAGEING NEW KUWAITI AIRPORT TERMINAL
(REPORTED SEPTTEL). NAFEESI CLAIMS TO BE "VERY CLOSE" TO OBTAINING
LICENSE. WHILE EMBOFFS HAVE HEARD OF SEVERAL KUWAITI GROUPS
MANEUVERING FOR LICENSE, NAFEESI AND HIS ASSOCIATES ARE IMPRESSIVE
COMBINATION AND COULD WELL COME OUT WITH THE PRICE.
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